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March 2024

NEWS TO KNOW

Section 5310 and 5311 Federal Funding Applications

Currently, there is no federal funding application available for the Section 5310 and 5311 programs. When applications become available a notice will be posted in this newsletter, as well as on our website at **Transit Applications and Reporting (modot.org)**.

REMINDER: FY 2025 State Transit Assistance - Application Available Now

The FY 2025 State Transit Assistance Application is available via the following link **Transit Applications and Reporting (modot.org)**. Applications are due April 1, 2024, and can be submitted to **motransit@modot.mo.gov**. The State Transit Assistance Program supports public transit providers by covering 50% of their transportation operating cost. The project period for these funds is July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

REMINDER: FY 2025 Missouri Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Assistance Program (MEHTAP) - Application Available Now

The FY 2025 Missouri Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Assistance Program application is available via the following link **Transit Applications and Reporting (modot.org)**. Applications are due April 1, 2024, and can be submitted to **motransit@modot.mo.gov**. The MEHTAP program assists non-for-profits and governmental/public transit providers supporting the transportation of seniors and individuals with disabilities by covering 50% of their transportation operating cost. The project period for these funds is July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

FTA Procurement Cost and Price Analysis - Regulation and Best Practices E-Learning Course

FTA's new Procurement Cost and Price Analysis - Regulations and Best Practices e-learning course is now available via the following link [Procurement Cost and Price Analysis - Regulations and Best Practices e-Learning Course](#). The course provides recipients with an understanding of the fundamentals and best practices for procurement cost and price analysis. The lessons from this e-learning course can be helpful for FTA recipients in mitigating procurement findings during State Management and Triennial Reviews. This course is approximately two hours.

Agency Spotlight

Southeast Missouri Transportation Service (SMTS) Announces Leadership Changes

SMTS Board President Cynthia Minnis announced in early March that Tracy Jones, current Director of Finance since 2017, has been appointed as the company's third executive director. Jones's appointment will be effective July 1, 2024. She issued the following statement upon acceptance of the position: "SMTS has a reputation of excellence in the public transit industry as the Nation's Second Largest Rural Transit Provider, and a culture that I find challenging, enjoyable and rewarding. I'm honored and thrilled for this opportunity. SMTS is filled with employees who have a heart and commitment to serve others. In the seven years I've been with the company, I've seen how our employees and our mission positively impact the counties we serve. I'm incredibly grateful for the Board's vote of confidence in my leadership ability, and for the years of mentorship I've had with the existing Executive Director, Denny Ward. I look forward to being a part of the ongoing success story SMTS has written over the past 50 Years." Other leadership changes at SMTS:



Debbie Elders, current Accounting Manager and been at SMTS since 2021, is being promoted to the Director of Finance position, as well as HR Manager.



Daniel Smith, current Fleet and Facility Manager at SMTS since 2018, is being promoted to Director of Operations.



Angela Firebaugh, current NEMT Supervisor and been with SMTS since 2011, will be Operations Supervisor.

HOT Transit Topic -- Volunteer Driver Programs

Volunteer Driver Policies

If you are currently operating a volunteer driver program or considering adding one, your organization should have policies that address these areas of operation. Many funding agencies require specific policies that cover all staff members associated with delivering service to customers, whether they are paid or unpaid. Project managers should review all the contracts or service agreements to ensure that required policies are in place.

The following policies are recommended whether a volunteer driver is operating an agency vehicle or their personal vehicle to transport passengers.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

1. Operation of a volunteer transportation program may trigger responsibilities for compliance of Title III of the ADA. Those responsibilities depend on the legal status of the sponsor and/or the types and modes of other transportation services that are operated. Persons with certain disabilities cannot be transported in private cars. However, those persons may need to be referred to appropriate alternate service providers. If the service provided in a personally owned vehicle requires only a donation, any costs related to the alternative services may need to be absorbed by the sponsoring organization.
2. All volunteer drivers should be trained to proficiency in the requirements of ADA.
3. If they are using a personal vehicle, they will still require training on service animals, securing mobility devices and sensitivity to people with disabilities that they will be serving.

Ethics

1. Sponsoring organizations should include volunteers in their Code of Ethics. A Code of Ethics includes the Board, officers, employees and volunteers engaged in the administration of contracts supported by Missouri State or Federal Assistance.
2. A Code of Ethics typically covers topics including gifts, personal conflicts of interest, organizational conflicts of interest, bonuses or commissions, restrictions on lobbying, political activity and false or fraudulent statements or claims. This statement should be signed by volunteers when engaged, and when any updates occur to the policy.

Code of Conduct

1. Driver conduct is one of the most important elements contributing to how the sponsoring organization is ensuring the safety of riders. Violations of these policies often lead to removal from paid and volunteer driver positions.
 - Not following traffic laws
 - Use of controlled or illegal substances
 - Theft, violence, and gross negligence
 - Violation of confidentiality, conflict of interest, code of conduct and ethics

Drug-Free Workplace

1. Sponsoring organizations that receive federal funding are required to comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act. Sponsoring organizations must have a policy that prohibits employees and volunteers from the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance at any of the sponsoring organization's facilities and/or during any of the programs offered by the sponsoring organization.

Harassment

1. Sponsoring organizations should have a policy that it will not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee or volunteer which harasses, disrupts or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment.

Confidentiality

1. Confidentiality should be reviewed regularly. It is best practice to have volunteers read and sign your confidentiality policy annually.
2. Transportation volunteers often know or become familiar with riders. While it is desirable to establish a positive relationship with riders, it is important to avoid situations that can

Reporting Suspected Abuse: Neglect, Abandonment and Exploitation

1. This typically applies to serving vulnerable adults and children, based on state and federal legal requirements.

Drug Testing

1. Drivers, including volunteers, of vehicles that have been manufactured to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, must have a valid commercial driver's license (CDL) with a passenger endorsement. Note that drivers holding a CDL, must be included in a drug and alcohol testing program that complies with U.S. Department of Transportation regulations found at 49 CFR Part 40 and 49 CFR Part 655 and 382.

Supervision of Volunteers, including annual reviews

1. Consider how you monitor other staff. Do you conduct on-board observations? Do you survey customers about your service?
2. Who will supervise and manage your volunteer drivers?
3. Discipline or removal of volunteer drivers.

Non-discrimination, expectations for respect and treatment of all staff, clients and community members, as well as service requirements

1. Staff members, whether paid or unpaid, are the face of your organization. It is important they represent the organization in a professional manner.

Payment or Donation Policies

The following information should be considered when developing and implementing Payment/Donation policies.

1. A copy of the Sponsoring Organization's Payment and/or Donation Policy should be available to volunteer using personally owned vehicles and a copy posted in organization owned vehicles. The policy should also be included in brochures and advertising materials.
2. Programs should design a system that respects the individual's anonymity. Some sponsoring organizations request financial support from the community and riders in the form of donations, yet do not pressure those who cannot afford to pay.
3. Drivers should be well informed about the donation policy.
4. It is not appropriate for drivers to demand donations from riders.
5. Many riders prefer to mail a check to the Sponsoring Organization once a month rather than donate each time they ride.
6. To avoid misunderstandings and protect the rider's anonymity, a collection system that does not require drivers to handle cash is preferred.

Reimbursement Policy

1. Most sponsoring organizations reimburse volunteers for personal vehicle mileage and other authorized expenses. The sponsoring organization should have a form to be used by volunteers operating personal vehicles to document mileage and other expenses. The reimbursement should be based on the same current mileage rate used for paid employees. Reimbursement for other expenditures, such as meals, should be based on the actual expense the volunteer incurred or on a per-diem rate.
2. If the sponsoring organization decides to pay more than the IRS rates for mileage and GSA rate for meals/per-diem, the organization needs to report the payments annually as a 1099 contracted employee. Payments more than the IRS rates are not reimbursable under MoDOT or FTA contracts.

Disabled Parking Privileges

1. Non-profit groups or organizations that transport people with physical disabilities can apply for a placard through the Missouri Department of Revenue, Motor Vehicles Division.
2. Volunteers should be trained in the use of placards only when they are transporting people with disabilities.

Federal Actions & Updates



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Notice of Funding Opportunities

EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program – April 1, 2024, deadline. About \$4.6 billion is available to address GHG emission reduction strategies, including through transit measures. Full NOFO and guidance: [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Page nine of the NOFO includes an illustrative list of example eligible measures from the transportation sector, many of which involve transit.

NOFO: GHG Reduction Measure Examples:

- Electrification requirements for state transit equipment fleets.
- Policies to expand transit use, such as van-pool programs, ridesharing, transit fare subsidies.
- New or expanded transportation infrastructure projects to facilitate public transit.

FTA Low-No and Buses & Bus Facilities Grant Programs – April 25, 2024, deadline. About \$1.10 billion and \$390 million are made available respectively for the two programs.

UPCOMING REPORTING

April 2024

DEB Semi-Annual Reporting -- 5311s

All reporting forms and related information will be sent out by Program Manager via email.

Notices on all above reporting will be sent through InTransit. A subscription link can be found at the bottom of this communication.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

2024 FTA Drug and Alcohol Program National Conference

April 2-4, 2024

Atlanta, GA

2024 CTAA Expo

June 9-12, 2024

West Palm Beach, FL

2024 MPTA Conference

Sept. 3-5, 2024

St. Louis, MO

(D&A Training for 5311s is on the afternoon of Tuesday, Sept. 3)

TRAINING RESOURCES

National RTAP: <https://www.nationalrtap.org/>

Missouri RTAP: <https://mltrc.mst.edu/mortaphome/>

National Transit Institute (NTI) <https://www.ntionline.com/>

National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) <https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/>

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA): <https://ctaa.org/>

USDOT Drug and Alcohol: <https://www.transportation.gov/odapc>

FTA Drug and Alcohol: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/drug-alcohol-program>

FMCSA Drug and Alcohol: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/drug-alcohol-testing-program>

FTA Webinars and Trainings [Homepage](#)

National Transit Institute's [Current Course Schedule](#) of Upcoming Training

FTA-Sponsored Training Courses [Homepage](#) | FTA [Safety Training Page](#) & [Enhanced Safety Trainings](#)

TSI Public Transportation [Catalogue](#) | TSI [Course Schedule PDF](#)

National RTAP [Upcoming Webinars](#)

CTAA [Training Calendar](#)

APTAU Learning [Homepage](#)

NCMM [e-Learning Catalogue](#)

Easterseals Project Action [Course Schedule](#)

Mineta Transportation Institute [Upcoming Webinars](#)

SUMC MLC [Learning Modules](#)

Visit our Website

For additional questions or concerns:

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